CLAIMS

1. A game console, comprising:

    a processor; and

    ◡ a non-removable hard disk drive coupled to the processor, the hard disk drive being configured to store various data associated with the game console.

2. A game console as recited in claim 1 further including a memory coupled to the processor.

3. A game console as recited in claim 1 further including a portable media drive coupled to the processor and configured to communicate with a storage disc.

4. A game console as recited in claim 1 further including a console application stored on the hard disk drive and executable on the processor, the console application configured to implement a user interface to the gaming system.

5. A game console as recited in claim 1 further including a portable memory unit coupled to the processor.

6. A game console as recited in claim 1 wherein the hard disk drive is configured to store game data, audio data, and video data.

7.   A game console as recited in claim 1 wherein the hard disk drive is segregated into a plurality of regions, each region for storing a particular type of data.

8.   A game console as recited in claim 1 wherein the hard disk drive is segregated into a user data region, an application region, and a console application region.

9.   A game console as recited in claim 1 wherein the hard disk drive is segregated into a settings region, a user data region, an application region, a utility region, and a console application region.

10.   A game console as recited in claim 1 wherein the hard disk drive is configured to store data associated with multiple saved games.

11.   A game console as recited in claim 1 wherein the hard disk drive is configured to store a list of recently used nicknames.

12.   A game console as recited in claim 1 wherein the game console boots into a console application stored on the hard disk drive.

13. A game console, comprising:

a processor; and

a hard disk drive coupled to the processor, the hard disk drive being configured to boot the game console and to store data associated with the game console.

14. A game console as recited in claim 13 wherein the game console boots into a console application stored on the hard disk drive.

15. A game console as recited in claim 13 wherein the hard disk drive is permanently installed in the game console.

16. A game console as recited in claim 13 further including a memory coupled to the processor.

17. A game console as recited in claim 13 wherein the hard disk drive contains a console application configured to implement a user interface to the gaming system.

18. A game console as recited in claim 13 further including a console application stored on the hard disk drive, the console application being configured to generate a listing of user data stored on the hard disk drive.

19.   A game console as recited in claim 13 wherein the hard disk drive is configured to store application data such that data associated with one application is inaccessible to other applications.

20.   A game console as recited in claim 13 wherein the hard disk drive is configured to store saved game data such that saved game data associated with a particular game is stored separately from saved game data associated with other games.

21.   A game console as recited in claim 13 wherein the hard disk drive is configured to store saved game data in a user data region and configured to store application-related data in an application data region.

22.   A game console, comprising:

a processor; and

a hard disk drive coupled to the processor, the hard disk drive being segregated into a first region to store user data and a second region to store application data, wherein user data associated with a particular application is segregated from user data associated with other applications and wherein application data associated with a particular application is segregated from application data associated with other applications.

23.   A game console as recited in claim 22 wherein the user data includes saved game data.

24. A game console as recited in claim 22 wherein the application data includes data to be used during future executions of the associated application.

25. A game console as recited in claim 22 further including a console application stored on the hard disk drive, the console application being configured to generate a list of user data stored in the first region.

26. A game console as recited in claim 22 wherein the disk drive is configured to store a list of recently used nicknames.

27. A method comprising:

identifying a game identifier associated with a game installed in a gaming system, wherein the gaming system contains a hard disk drive;

determining portions of the hard disk drive that are associated with the game based on the game identifier; and

preventing the game from accessing portions of the hard disk drive that are not associated with the game.

28. A method as recited in claim 27 further including saving a current state of the game to the hard disk drive in response to a save game request.

29. A method as recited in claim 27 further including retrieving a list of saved games associated with the game installed in the gaming system.

30. A method as recited in claim 27 further including:

retrieving a list of saved games associated with the game installed in the gaming system; and

displaying the list of saved games to a user of the gaming system.

31. A method as recited in claim 27 further including:

retrieving a list of saved games associated with the game installed in the gaming system;

displaying the list of saved games to a user of the gaming system; and

executing the game using saved game data selected by the user of the gaming system.

32. A method as recited in claim 27 further including retrieving a list of recently used nicknames.

33. A method as recited in claim 27 further including retrieving a list of recently used nicknames associated with the game installed in the gaming system.

34. A method as recited in claim 27 wherein determining portions of the hard disk drive that are associated with the game based on the game identifier comprises:

determining a portion of a user data region on the hard disk drive that is associated with the game; and

determining a portion of an application data region on the hard disk drive that is associated with the game.

35. One or more computer-readable media comprising computer-executable instructions that, when executed, perform the method as recited in claim 27.

36. A method comprising:

retrieving a list of recently used nicknames in a gaming system;

displaying the list of recently used nicknames to a user of the gaming system; and

allowing the user of the gaming system to select a nickname from the list of recently used nicknames.

37. A method as recited in claim 36 wherein the list of recently used nicknames is associated with a game installed in the gaming system.

38. A method as recited in claim 36 wherein retrieving a list of recently used nicknames includes retrieving the list of recently used nicknames from a hard disk drive in the gaming system.

39. A method as recited in claim 36 further including allowing the user of the gaming system to create a new nickname.

40. A method as recited in claim 36 further including:

allowing the user of the gaming system to create a new nickname; and

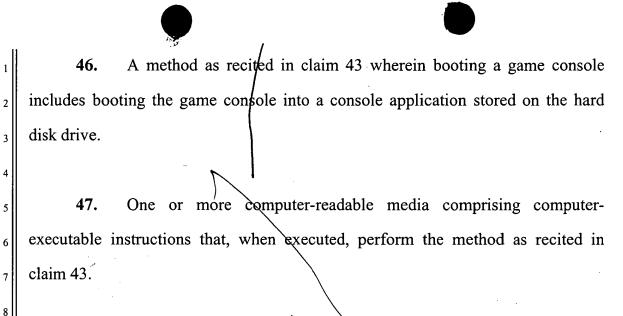adding the new nickname to the list of recently used nicknames.

41. A method as recited in claim 36 further including automatically entering the selected nickname into a high score display.

42. One or more computer-readable media comprising computer-executable instructions that, when executed, perform the method as recited in claim 36.

43. A method comprising:

booting a game console from a non-removable hard disk drive integrated into the game console; and

storing data associated with the game console on the hard disk drive.

44. A method as recited in claim 43 further including storing a list of recently used nicknames on the hard disk drive.

45. A method as recited in claim 43 further including storing data associated with multiple saved games on the hard disk drive.

46. A method as recited in claim 43 wherein booting a game console includes booting the game console into a console application stored on the hard disk drive.

47. One or more computer-readable media comprising computer-executable instructions that, when executed, perform the method as recited in claim 43.

48. A method comprising:

initializing a game console using a non-removable hard disk drive integrated into the game console, wherein the game console will not operate unless the hard disk drive is functioning; and

storing data associated with the game console on the hard disk drive.

49. A method as recited in claim 48 wherein the stored data on the hard disk drive includes data associated with multiple saved games.

50. A method as recited in claim 48 wherein initializing the game console includes launching a console application stored on the hard disk drive.

51. A method as recited in claim 48 further including executing a game application installed in the game console after initializing the game console.

52. One or more computer-readable media comprising computer-executable instructions that, when executed, perform the method as recited in claim 48.

53. A method comprising:

launching an application on a game console;

identifying a status of a plurality of temporary storage areas on a hard disk drive contained in the game console;

if at least one of the plurality of temporary storage areas is empty, assigning one of the empty storage areas to the application; and

if all of the plurality of temporary storage areas contain data, clearing a temporary storage area having an oldest timestamp and assigning the cleared temporary storage area to the application.

54. A method as recited in claim 53 wherein the application is a game.

55. A method as recited in claim 53 further including assigning a particular temporary storage area to the application if the particular temporary storage area contains data associated with the application.

56. A method comprising:

launching an application on a game console;

identifying a status of a plurality of temporary storage areas on a hard disk drive contained in the game console;

if a particular temporary storage area contains data associated with the application, assigning the particular temporary storage area to the application;

if no temporary storage area contains data associated with the application:

if at least one of the plurality of temporary storage areas is empty, assigning one of the empty storage areas to the application; and

if all of the plurality of temporary storage areas contain data, clearing a temporary storage area having an oldest timestamp and assigning the cleared temporary storage area to the application.

57. A computer-readable medium for a game console comprising computer-executable instructions that, when executed, direct the game console to:

associate user data with a first region of a hard disk drive contained in the game console;

associate application data with a second region of the hard disk drive;

allow an application to access particular portions of the first region that are associated with the application; and

allow the application to access particular portions of the second region that are associated with the application.

58.   A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 57 further comprising computer-executable instructions that, when executed, direct the game console to prevent the application from accessing portions of the first region that are not associated with the application.

59.   A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 57 further comprising computer-executable instructions that, when executed, direct the game console to prevent the application from accessing portions of the first region that are not associated with the application.

60.   A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 57 wherein the application is a game.